Amendments to the Claims

Claim 1 (Currently amended): Apparatus for turning material piled on the ground in a windrow comprising:

a first track assembly and a second track assembly spaced apart from one another and having continuous tracks, each having elongated track axes spaced apart from one another and approximately parallel to one another, the track assemblies engaging the ground and being adapted to move in a forward direction on the ground toward the material piled on the ground;

a lift assembly connected between the first and second ~~tracks~~ track assemblies and comprising an upper end, a lower end, and a belt trained around the upper and lower ends;

the lower end being positioned adjacent the ground and the upper end being positioned in spaced relation above, and rearwardly of the lower end whereby the belt includes ~~a~~ an upwardly presented front belt surface extending upwardly from the lower end to the upper end, and a downwardly presented rear belt surface extending from the upper end to the lower end;

a power source connected to both of the first and second track assemblies for independently driving the first and second track assemblies;

the power source being connected to at least one of the upper and lower ends for causing the at least one end to rotate and cause the front ~~face~~ surface of the belt to move continuously from the lower end toward the upper end and to cause the rear ~~face~~ surface of the belt to move continuously from the upper end toward the lower end, whereby the belt will engage the material piled on the ground and carry the material upwardly on the front surface of the belt and then drop the material back onto the ground as the belt passes over the upper end.

Claim 2 (Currently amended): The apparatus of claim 1 and further comprising a frame member adjacent the upper end of the lift assembly, the frame member being stationary with respect to the movement of the belt of the lift assembly, and having a first group and a second group of vanes mounted thereon in spaced relation to one another adjacent the upper end for engaging and guiding the material as the belt carries the material over the upper end and drops the material back onto the ground.

Claim 3 (Currently amended): The apparatus of claim 2 wherein each of the vanes in the first and second groups of vanes have a flat vane surface, the first and second groups of vanes each being independently adjustable to change independently the direction of the flat vane surfaces of the first and second groups of vanes so as to direct and guide the material in ~~the desired direction as it~~first and second different directions as the material passes over the upper end of the lift assembly.

Claim 4 (Original): The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the upper end includes at least one upper sprocket and the lower end includes at least one lower sprocket, the belt being trained around the upper and lower sprockets, a belt tightening apparatus extending between the upper and lower sprockets and being longitudinally extensible to expand the distance between the upper and lower sprockets and thereby tighten the belt trained around the upper and lower sprockets.

Claim 5 (Original): The apparatus of claim 4 wherein the belt tightening apparatus comprises a hydraulic cylinder enclosed within a hydraulic cylinder protective housing so as to protect the hydraulic cylinder from coming in contact with the material.

Claim 6 (Currently amended): In combination:

a windrow of material lying on the ground, the windrow having a width, a height, and a length;

a first track assembly and a second track assembly spaced apart from one another and straddling the windrow, the first and second track assemblies each having a continuous track, engaging the ground for moving the track assemblies in a forward direction;

a lift assembly movably connected ~~between~~ to both the first and second tracks and comprising an upper end, a lower end, and a belt trained around the upper and lower ends;

the lower end being positioned adjacent the ground and forwardly of the upper end for engaging the windrow before the upper end, the upper end being positioned in spaced relation above and rearwardly from the lower end whereby the belt includes a front surface presented upwardly and extending upwardly from the lower end to the upper end, and a

rear belt surface presented downwardly and extending from the upper end to the lower end;

the belt being in contact with the material lying on the ground;

a power source connected to both of the first and second track assemblies for independently driving the first and second track assemblies to move the track assemblies in a forward direction on the ground toward the windrow of material;

the power source being connected to at least one of the upper and lower ends for causing the at least one end to rotate and cause the front face of the belt to move continuously from the lower end toward the upper end and to cause the rear face of the belt to move continuously from the upper end toward the lower end, whereby the belt will engage the material piled on the ground and carry the material upwardly on the front surface of the belt and then drop the material back onto the ground as the belt passes over the upper end.

Claim 7 (Currently amended): The apparatus of claim 6 and further comprising a frame member that is stationary with respect to the belt, the frame member being adjacent the upper end and having a plurality of vanes mounted thereon in spaced relation to one another adjacent the upper end for engaging and guiding the material as the belt carries the material over the upper end and drops the material back onto the ground.

Claim 8 (Currently amended): The apparatus of claim 7 wherein the plurality of vanes each have a flat vane surface, the plurality of vanes including first and second groups of vanes that are independently adjustable to change the direction of the flat vane surfaces so as to direct and guide the material in ~~the desired direction~~first and second directions respectively.

Claim 9 (Original): The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the upper end includes at least one upper sprocket and the lower end includes at least one lower sprocket, the belt being trained around the upper and lower sprockets, a belt tightening apparatus extending between the upper and lower sprockets and being longitudinally extensible to expand the distance between the upper and lower sprockets and thereby tighten the belt trained around the upper and lower sprockets.

Claim 10 (Original): The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the belt tightening apparatus comprises a hydraulic cylinder enclosed within a hydraulic cylinder protective housing so as to protect the hydraulic cylinder from coming in contact with the material.

Claims 11-13 (Cancelled).

Claim 14 (Currently amended): A method for turning a quantity of material contained within a first elongated pit comprising:

positioning a belt assembly within the first elongated pit, the belt assembly having a lower end engaging the material within the first elongated pit, an upper end above the lower end, and a continuous belt trained around the lower and upper ends;

moving the continuous belt so that it progresses from the lower end to the upper end on ~~a~~ an upwardly presented front face of the belt, and moves from the upper end to the lower end on a downwardly presented back face of the belt;

lifting the material on the front face of the belt assembly as the belt assembly moves from the lower end of the belt assembly to the upper end of the belt assembly;

depositing the material back in the first pit after the belt assembly has carried the material from the lower end of the belt assembly to the upper end.

Claim 15 (Original): The method of claim 14 and further comprising moving the belt assembly along the length of the first pit so as to engage and lift all of the material within the first pit.

Claim 16 (Original): The method of claim 15 and further comprising mounting the belt assembly on an elongated channel mounted above the first pit and extending in a direction parallel to the pit, the step of moving the belt assembly comprising moving the belt assembly along the length of the channel.

Claim 17 (Original): The method of claim 15 wherein a second elongated pit has a quantity of material therein, the method further comprising moving the belt assembly into the second pit after engaging and lifting all the material in the first pit, engaging the material in the second pit

with the lower end of the belt assembly, lifting the material in the second pit upwardly, and depositing the material back into the second pit after the material has reached the upper end of the belt assembly.

Claim 18 (Original): The method of claim 17 wherein the first and second pits are side by side, and the method comprises moving the belt assembly in a first direction along the length of the first pit, and moving the belt assembly in a second direction opposite from the first direction along the length of the second pit.

Claim 19 (Original): The method of claim 14 and further comprising holding the belt assembly completely above the material within the first pit, and moving the lower end of the belt assembly downward into contact with the material within the first pit.

Claim 20 (New): A method for turning material piled on the ground in a windrow; the method comprising:

taking an apparatus comprising a first track assembly and a second track assembly spaced apart from one another and each having a continuous track trained around spaced apart forward and rear wheels, the track assemblies engaging the ground and being adapted to move in a forward direction on the ground toward the material piled on the ground; the apparatus further comprising a lift assembly positioned between and connected to both the first and second track assemblies and comprising an upper end, a lower end, and a belt trained around the upper and lower ends, the lower end being positioned adjacent the ground and the upper end being positioned in spaced relation above and rearwardly of the lower end whereby the belt includes an upwardly presented front belt surface extending upwardly from the lower end to the upper end, and a downwardly presented rear belt surface extending from the upper end to the lower end;

powering the first and second track assemblies independently of one another so as to steer the apparatus in a forward direction toward the windrow;

moving the upwardly presented front belt surface from the lower end of the lift assembly to the upper end of the lift assembly and the downwardly present rear belt surface from the upper end of the lift assembly to the lower end of the lift assembly;

steering the first and second track assemblies so that they straddle the windrow and the lower end of the lift assembly engages the windrow and causes the material in the windrow to be carried by the upwardly presented front belt surface to the upper end of the lift assembly;

dropping the material of the windrow from the top end of the lift assembly back onto the ground.

Claim 21 (New): The method according to claim 20 and further comprising using a first group of vanes to deflect a first portion of the material being dropped from the top lift assembly in a first direction and using a second group of vanes to deflect a second portion of the material being dropped from the top end of the lift assembly in a second direction.

Claim 22 (New): The method according to claim 20 and wherein the belt is trained around first and second rotating members, a tube assembly having a first tube member connected to the first rotating member and being telescopically mounted with respect to a second tube member connected to the second rotating member; the method further comprising using a longitudinally extensible piston and cylinder located inside the first and second tube members to cause the first tube member to telescope and expand longitudinally with respect to the second tube member so as to increase the tension of the belt trained around the first and second rotating members.